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News about dance in Leicester 2011

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12th December

Local lad gets top dance job



Leicester dancer **Jack Evans** couldn't believe his luck when he landed a role in the top selling musical *42 Street*, running now at CURVE. The 20 year old dancer was at auditions in London earlier this year and was the only artist from Leicester to land a job in the musical's cast. "It was pure coincidence that my home town is Leicester", Jack told us, "but it's really good to be working in a top show and am able to spend Christmas with my family."

Ever since the age of five, Jack has been hooked on dance. In 2010 he appeared on national television when he was one of the dancers on stage with Diana Vickers, performing on one of the X-factor shows.

While he is first and foremost a dancer, Jack also has skills in acting and singing and has been trying his hand at teaching tap dancing, a dance style at which he excels. He joined the Tap Attack Youth Company and became dance captain of the National England Tap Team. In 2010, he won the crown for the World Duet Tap Championships in Germany.

Now a member of the cast of *42nd Street*, Jack dances the role of Aristocrat in the ensemble. One of the youngest members of the cast, he told us "getting into the show was like stepping up to the next level. The cast are really nice people, they are easy to get on with, welcoming and inspiring to work with."

"Being a dancer is where my true skills lie", Jack told us, "but dance is an umbrella for so many other things - TV work, West End companies, shows, how to work with cameras. I'd like to be a choreographer and a lot of this career is about grabbing opportunities when they crop up. "

Having worked in London, Jack thinks that "the pace of things in Leicester is slower but people have more time for you."

In a city where you can find talented dancers and a lot of work is going on, Jack has shown us that that *is* possible for local people to land top jobs.

[Find out more about Jack Evans from his web site](#)

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Akram Khan returns to Curve with *Desh* - a spectacular success



Photo © Richard Haughton

Trevor Locke looks at the background to the show and artsIn's Reshma Karia gives her impressions

Akram Khan, the internationally acclaimed dancer and choreographer, opened the autumn season at Curve with the World Premiere of his new dance production, ***DESH*** (Tuesday 13 to Saturday 17 September 2011).

artsIn went to see the world premier show on Thursday 15th September.

Reshma Karia writes:

A magical and intriguing performance by Akram Khan lit up the whole stage with his amazing movements, creating his solo dance show *Desh*. His performance was one of a kind and really inspiring to watch.

He created something that captured the audience. Taking on the whole stage and its state of the art scenery technology, Akram Khan's dancing and actions made you feel like you were part of what he was trying to feel.

Using each part of the stage, and all of the scenic capabilities that Curve could muster, his dance-acting story about his childhood showed an immense journey from his roots.

The show's mysterious and mystical start, made you want to watch more. At the very start, he walked on to the darkened stage carrying a lamp and proceeded to hit a block with a sledge hammer, punching great banging sounds into the quiet auditorium.

From starting his dance training at seven years old, Akram has become a leading inspiration to other new actors and dancers. For anyone not familiar with the Bangladeshi roots lying the core of the work, it did not matter because Khan brought it all to life with his actions.

Showing his childhood and personal experiences in such an intimate and intense way made you think about his culture. The different types of music that were played in the show along with the projected animations, made the scenes feel so surreal. You could *feel* his inner thoughts. What amazed me the most was how someone could sustain that amount of energy and passion for one and half hours without taking a break.

Even though I had not seen his work before I would say it was a rare performance and would love to watch one of his shows again.

The show had its humorous moments, along with the darker and more serious parts and a lot of deep emotions were signified by his gestures and movements. My favourite part of the whole show was when the screen came down at the front of the stage and the lighting created an animation, making it look trees, birds and boats. It all appeared to be very natural. His acting did not slip up; he gave it his all and from the audience's reaction, they were not disappointed.

He received warm applause, some cheers, some whistles and some gave him a standing ovation. It was a spectacular success.

Background

DESH follows the success of Khan's previous co-productions with Curve; *IN-I*, a duet with **Juliette Binoche**, and *VERTICAL ROAD*, which received their World Premieres at Curve in 2008 and 2010 respectively.

In this Curve co-production, Khan returned to his roots, to create his first full-length contemporary dance solo *DESH*, inspired by his home country of Bangladesh.

DESH, meaning homeland in Bengali, explored the idea of transformation - of body, land, identity and memory, while examining the contradictions of Khan's British-Asian identity.

The set, costume and visual design were by **Tim Yip** and music by **Jocelyn Pook**.



Photo © Richard Haughton

Created after a year of research both in the UK and Bangladesh and performed during the year Bangladesh celebrates the 40th anniversary of its independence from Pakistan, *DESH* draws together multiple tales of land, nation and resistance. These forces converge into the body and voice of one man trying to balance in an unstable world.

Khan used his dance to narrate a story, weaving together threads of memory, experience and myth into a surreal world of surprising connection. He appears fragile in the face of overwhelming forces but celebrates the resilience of the human spirit in the rhythms of hard manual labour, dreams, transformation and survival.



Photo © Richard Haughton

Leicester holds special significance for the award-winning choreographer. Khan is an alumnus of Dance at De Montfort University and relished returning to the city to create his work at Curve. The production was devised during a six-week residency, in which Khan

uses the theatre's exceptional stage and rehearsal spaces to develop this new piece.



Photo © Richard Haughton

DESH created a completely new environment on stage, one that symbolised and embodied the chaos, but also the hopes of Bangladesh and its people, who are among the most economically and environmentally vulnerable in the world.



Photo © Richard Haughton

A world-class collection of artists brought together from all over the globe have collaborated with Khan to create a set of staggering breadth and scale for DESH, to bring the beauty and brutality of Bangladesh to the stage. Oscar and BAFTA winning Chinese designer **Tim Yip** (CROUCHING TIGER HIDDEN DRAGON) has created the set and costume designs.



Photo © Richard Haughton

The show made use of Curve's remarkable stage technology.

The show is due to go to London before embarking on a world tour.

[Information and tickets available from the Curve web site.](#)

3rd July

We talk to Leicester dancer Tom Shilcock.



Born and raised in Leicester Tom started his training at the **Dupont Dance Stage School** and then went on to train at **Laine Theatre Arts**, after receiving a scholarship. His passion for dance and drive for success is unparalleled as is his commitment to helping the people who, without the right support, would not get the encouragement and opportunities they deserve.

[See the full article on Tom Shilcock](#)

17th June

Leicester Dancer **Tom Shilcock** was on Radio Leicester's Jim Davis show this morning talking about his work and especially the workshop he has planned. So, we checked out his profile on the [So You Think You Can Dance web site](#).

We found out that the 23 year old tap dancer from Leicester has been practicing jazz, tap, ballet and commercial dance from the age of 16.

At 19 he received a scholarship to Laine Theatre Arts where he furthered his musical knowledge, studying contemporary, musical theatre, singing and drama. His dream is to tour as a backing dancer to big names, he has previously danced on stage with Meat Loaf and Jamelia in the Royal Variety performance.

Tom also runs a dancing and singing workshop for children; **Next Generation Performing Arts**, in his home of Leicester. Although he is familiar with numerous dance styles, he says tap is his love and with the show, he wants to make others more aware of the genre; "I want to show boys it's cool to dance."

Find out more [About Tom Shilcock on Facebook](#).

Let's Dance Festival

Thursday 12th to Sunday 15th May

Brought to you by **Serendipity Artists Movement**, Let's Dance is a week-long dance festival in Leicester that celebrates International Dance Day. The aim of the festival is to raise the profile of dance

throughout Leicester by offering a range of performances by local, national and international artists that reflect the diversity of the city. For our part Phoenix Square will be showcasing a series of films, talks and live performances that celebrate different forms of dance.

[See the full programme on the Phoenix Website.](#)

Pina Bausch

Is it dance? Is it theatre? Or is it just life? **Wim Wenders'** homage to the great German choreographer **Pina Bausch** is more than just dance up on screen. The Theatre's experimental dance troupe launch themselves from the screen in an exhausting array of intense, interpretive and sensual emotions, bringing the audience closer to the performance than they might have ever believed possible. This stunning 3D masterpiece is itself an expression of Tanztheater ("dance theatre"), taking the viewer on a journey from the constraints of the Pina Theatre in Wuppertal, exploding out onto the industrial town's streets, using the decrepit buildings themselves as props for incredible routines. More than just a film, this is the reason for 3D cinema. Watching it is an incredibly moving experience and brings to mind the words of Pina herself when asked on the importance of her art-form: "Dance, dance otherwise we are lost".

[You can see Pina \(3D\) at the Phoenix from 22nd April to 14th May](#)

Dance4 presents - Europe in motion: Mosaic Identities

Friday 25 February at 7.30 p.m.

The next generation of dance artists, drawn from the Netherlands, Austria, Turkey and the UK, share their ideas on the future of dance performance. Expect to be intrigued and surprised as, fresh from some of Europe's most important dance festivals, they bring their exciting new perspectives to Leicester. A thought-provoking evening of performance and discussion for dance professionals and all those interested in the future of this art form. 2 for 1 offer for University of Leicester and DMU students and staff. Quote 'Dance4'. £7 / £5 (con). **Buy tickets** at Box office: 0116 252 2455

www.embracearts.co.uk

Events at the Peepul Centre

The Peepul Theatre and Arts season officially opens its doors tonight with a fantastic showcase by Mass Movement ... only a few tickets left for these performances and they are still selling like hotcakes!

We continue our programme next Thursday 10th February with a visit from ATMA Dance, proud to be the only venue in the midlands to have this amazing show we suggest you book your tickets now... see the below quotes and links to get a taste of what you can expect on the night!

"... its racy sheen and sensual attack show just how far the Bharatnatyam style can be taken" - Luke Jennings, The Observer on Angika Dance Company

"The performance by ATMA, the new dance company under the direction of Mayuri Boonham, at Made in Somerset was one of the highlights of the festival." - Chris Fogg, former Director of Take Art!

"... haunting, beautifully nuanced and compelling." - Chris Fogg, former Director of Take Art!

Video Clips

"...Boonham's contrasting double bill demonstrates how capably she applies a contemporary kinetic intelligence to her background in bharatanatyam... ATMA is a company worth clocking" - Donald Hutura on Sivaloka / Ghatam in Pulse

Sivaloka

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvOeOweif-M>

Ghatam

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDUmzEcopi0>

Elephanta video diary - making of Sivaloka

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTnnB1uZtHQ>

Visit www.peepulcentre.com for more information about this show and the rest of the season and we hope to see you here very soon!

2nd February

The Search is on for Leicester's Best Dance Crew



2Funky and **The Peepul Centre** are on the lookout for **Leicester's Best Dance Crew**. Leicester's finest crews will battle it out to win the 2011 trophy and £500 cash prize.

The competition will take place on **Saturday 26 th February 2011** , at **The Peepul Centre** and will be judged by a panel of dance professionals, with audience input. There will also be a surprise guest artist performing on the night and a £50 prize for the best dancer from the audience.

Vijay Mistry of 2Funky said: *"There is a wealth of talent out there and Leicestershire has much to be proud of. This will be a celebration of all the exceptional dance crews in the county, particularly those who have previously not had the platform to showcase their ability."*

Leicester's Best Dance Crew 8pm , Saturday 26 th February 2011 (Doors open 7.30pm) Advance tickets are £9/ £6 (under 14's) available from: 2Funky : 0116 299 0700 / www.2funktickets.co.uk
The Peepul Centre: 0116 261 6000

Dance Studio

Dance open studio with Gabi Reuter, 11a.m. - 12.30 p.m. PACE Building, Studio 2, De Montfort University.

Enjoy watching work being created right in front of your eyes. Acclaimed choreographer **Gabi Reuter** directs DMU dance students to create a unique improvisation piece made specifically for the **Cultural Exchanges** festival.

As an open studio event, audience members are welcome to attend as and when they wish. The event will be followed by a post show discussion.

The event is free and open to the general public. Ticket booking will be made available from February 10th 2011. NB Please arrive at least ten minutes before the scheduled start of the event to ensure entry.

In the event of a sold out performance then pre-reserved seats will be released if not claimed before that time. For more information on how to find us please visit dmu.ac.uk/maps, or request an access map when you make your booking.

Nearest train station: Leicester Railway Station, London Rd, Leicester, LE2 0QB

Please get in touch if you require any further information: mculturalexchanges@dmu.ac.uk or 0116 250 6229 or see our [entry on Facebook](#).

Find out more about [Cultural Exchanges Festival 2011](#).

1st February

You will never look at Swan Lake in the same light again ...

[We review The Black Swan](#)

Indian Classical Dance

Find out about classical dancing from India through the [Centre for Indian Classical Dance](#).

Dance to Do in Leicester

Information about **American Square** dancing in Leicester can be found on the website of the [Association of American Square Dance Clubs](#).

Dance with Darcy, the Leicestershire **Victorian Dancers**. [Recreating the dances of the 19th century](#).

Dance to See in Leicester

Useful pages and links

[Dancers and troupes: contact us to be featured on artsIn](#)

[Check out all our news pages](#)

[Clubs and DJS](#)

[Addict Dance Studios on Facebook](#)

[Leicester College of Performing Arts on Facebook](#)

[The main web site for the Leicester College of Performing Arts](#)

[Diversity at the Peepul Centre](#)